GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:4307
ANSWERED ON:28.03.2017
Use of Harmful Pesticides in Fruits and Vegetables
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Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that extremely harmful insecticides have been found in 12.5 percent of vegetables, fruits and milk and other eatable items in the country, if so, the details thereof;

(b) whether the banned chemicals are used in production of fruits and vegetables and also in early ripening of fruits and vegetables in the country, which have an adverse impact on human health, livestock and environment;

(c) if so, the provision laid down by the Government to prevent such activities of artificial ripening of fruits and vegetables;

(d) the details of action taken by the Government under the above provision during the each of the last three years and the current year;

(e) whether the Government has conducted any awareness campaign in this regard, if so, the outcome thereof; and

(f) the steps taken/proposed to be taken by the Government to ban the use of harmful pesticides in the country?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE

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(a) & (b): The Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare is implementing "Monitoring of Pesticide Residues at National Level" (MPRNL) scheme, under which food commodities and environmental samples are collected and analyzed for the presence of pesticide residues. During 2013-16, a total of 59,511 samples were analyzed, out of which residues above Maximum Residue Limit (MRL), as fixed by Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI), were found out in 1499 (2.5 %) samples. The commodity wise breakup is given at Annexure I. None of the banned pesticides were detected under the MPRNL scheme.

Contdâ€¦2/-

(c): As per the information provided by the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI), Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, sub-regulation 2.3.5 of Food Safety and Standards (Prohibition and Restriction on Sales) Regulations, 2011- "No person shall sell or offer or expose for sale or have in his premises for the purpose of sale under any description, fruits which have been artificially ripened by use of acetylene gas, commonly known as carbide gas.

Provided that fruits maybe artificially ripened by use of Ethylene gas at a concentration up to 100ppm (100 l/L) depending upon the crop , variety and maturity".

(d): As per the information provided by the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI), no separate centralized enforcement data regarding presence of pesticides residues and ripening of fruits and vegetables with banned chemicals is available. However, based on information made available by the States and UTs, who are primarily responsible for enforcement of the provisions of Food Safety and Standard Act, 2006, and rules made there under, details of food samples analyzed, found non-conforming to the norms and action taken during the last three years is at Annexure II.

(e): A write up on harmful effects of consuming fruits artificially ripened with Calcium Carbide is uploaded on the FSSAI website for awareness of the public at large. FSSAI also jointly issued advertisements on all India basis in newspapers with Department of Consumer Affairs under the aegis of "Jago Grahak Jago" on artificially ripening of fruits. FSSAI has also asked State Food Safety Commissioners of all States/UTs to undertake awareness campaign on the pesticides/insecticides residues in fruits and vegetables in order to educate consumers. Consumers are also being made aware of need for washing fruits & vegetables before consumption to avoid any harmful effects of pesticides etc. through social media, print media, events, fairs etc.

(f): The Registration Committee (RC) constituted under Section 5 of the Insecticides Act, 1968 registers pesticides after considering its efficacy and safety to human beings, animals and environment. In additions, technical reviews are carried out from time to time to

assess the safety of pesticides for their continued use. Based on which, the Central Government has banned/restricted certain pesticides/insecticides for use in the country. The details are at Annexure III. Further, in July 2013, an Expert Committee was constituted under the chairmanship of Dr. Anupam Verma, Former National Professor, IARI, New Delhi to review 66 pesticides which are either banned or restricted in one or more countries of the world but continued to be registered in India. Considering the recommendation of Expert Committee as accorded by the Registration Committee, the Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare, vide its Notification S.O. 4212(E) dated 15th December, 2016, has invited objections and suggestions from the public/stakeholders on banning/phasing out of certain pesticides. The details are at Annexure IV.